



City of New Bedford
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P R E S S R E L E A S E

New Bedford Health Department Announces New Pre-Rental Voucher Program for City Landlords

New Bedford, Massachusetts –New Bedford Health Department announced today that it will offer a new Pre-Rental Voucher Program, on a pilot basis, for all landlords who own rental properties in the City of New Bedford. The goal of the program is to encourage landlords to proactively have their apartments inspected and certified to lessen the likelihood and frequency of tenant damage complaints. The program is expected to make the rental unit more attractive to potential tenants as well as to help ensure that tenants treat rental property respectfully.

At the request of the landlord, the city’s housing inspectors will visit rental property and document the existing conditions of the rental unit *before* the property is rented to a new tenant, for a fee of \$100.00. Upon completion of the inspection, the rental unit will be certified by the Health Department and the landlord will receive proof as to the condition of the apartment at the start of the rental.

“This program allows us to help landlords keep their properties in compliance, and it helps apartment-seekers find certified and safe apartments,” says Dr. Brenda Weis, director of the New Bedford Health Department.

The pre-rental inspection differs from a general complaint inspection. Landlords, or an authorized agent, must request the pre-rental voucher inspection within 14 days of the start of a new lease or rental agreement being signed. The unit cannot be occupied at the time of inspection.

After the inspection, a report will be given to the landlord, the unit is given a numbered Certificate of Fitness for Human Habitation, stating that, at the time of inspection, the unit complied with the Massachusetts Housing Code Standards.

If the unit does not meet certification standards, the landlord will be given a timeline and a re-inspection may be required. Likewise, while the unit may be certified through this program, it

does not mean a future complaint cannot be reported to, and inspected by, the New Bedford Health Department.

The Pre-Rental Voucher Program will continue through December 31, 2015 at which time, the Health Department will evaluate the program and determine whether it will continue.

To request a pre-rental inspection, for more details, or for a list of items to confirm are in working order to better ensure a successful inspection, please contact the New Bedford Health Department at (508) 991-6199

The New Bedford Health Department is committed to promoting and protecting the health of New Bedford residents by upholding important regulations and implementing innovative health and wellness programming.

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